

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 03074 280749Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 3074

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINR, TS
SUBJECT: KHEMAIS CHAMARI: ALLEGED PLANS TO VISIT U.S.

1. HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR. CALLED ME JUST BEFORE DEPARTING APRIL 22 ON A VISIT TO THE PERSIAN GULF TO TELL ME THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND HOW A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY LIKE THE U.S. WOULD "ADMIT A TUNISIAN OPPOSITIONIST LIKE AHMED MESTRI OR EVEN AHMED BEN SALAH" BUT HE THOUGHT "A LOT OF PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON" WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT CHAMARI WAS PLANNING TO GO TO THE U.S. SOON "TO MAKE SPEECHES AGAINST US". I TOLD BOURGUIBA, JR. THAT THE NAME CHAMARI RANG NO BELL WITH ME.

2. CHAMARI, HE CLAIMED, IS "THE NUMBER ONE TUNISIAN COMMUNIST". I ASKED WHERE HE IS BASED. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID, "I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE BUT PROBABLY IN FRANCE." I THANKED HIM FOR THE INFORMATION WHICH SEEMED TO BE ALL HE HAD AVAILABLE. HE DID NOT KNOW CHAMARI'S GIVEN NAMES OR HAVE ANY OTHER DATA.

3. A SEARCH OF OUR FILES REVEALS THE NAME OF KHEMAIS CHAMMARI OR CHAMARI, A TUNISIAN WRITER FOR LEFTIST MAGAZINE AFRIQUE-ASIE BASED IN PARIS. HE WAS BORN IN TUNIS NOVEMBER 7, 1942. HE FIGURED AS A LEADER OF DIS-
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 03074 280749Z

SIDENT STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS IN 1962, 1966 AND 1968. IN SEPTEMBER 1968 HE WAS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR TWO YEARS AND FOUR MONTHS (TWO YEARS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN AN ILLEGAL ORGANIZATION, THREE MONTHS FOR DEFAMATION AND ONE MONTH FOR PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS). HE HAS LIVED IN PARIS SINCE 1970. HE DECLINED A GENERAL GOT OFFER OF AMNESTY IN 1973 TO TUNISIANS LIVING IN EXILE. A FRENCH JOURNALIST OF OUR

ACQUANTANCE CONSIDERS CHAMARI TO BE OUT OF TOUCH WITH CURRENT TUNISIAN REALITY. HE MENTIONED THAT MANY BELIEVE CHAMARI IS REALLY A TOOL OF THE TUNISIAN EMBASSY IN PARIS, BUT SAMPLES OF HIS CURRENT WRITINGS MAKE THIS IMPROBABLE. OUR RECORDS, IN SPITE OF SEVERAL NOTATIONS ON HIM OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS, CONTAIN NO CLEAR INDICATION OF ANY COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP.

4. COMMENT: THIS MESSAGE IS SUBMITTED FOR PURPOSES OF THE RECORD AND TO ALERT INTERESTED OFFICIALS OF CHAMARI'S REPUTED DESIRE TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES. WE KNOW OF NO REASON WHY HE SHOULD NOT BE ISSUED A VISA IF HE IS FOUND OTHERWISE ELIGIBLE. DURING THE AFOREMENTIONED TELEPHONE CONVERSATION I EXTRACTED A PROMISE FROM BOURGUIBA JR. OF A MEETING WITH HIM WHEN HE RETURNS TO TUNIS. I PLAN TO PURSUE THIS SUBJECT WITH HIM. MULCAHY

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